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CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

‘IT’S SERIOUS’

Official: 10%-20% of Connecticut residents could contract COVID-19 in near future

Lamont bans large gatherings to slow virus spread, asks workers to telecommute

The day’s events

- Gov. Ned Lamont issues executive orders banning gatherings of 250 or more people and waiving the state’s 180-day requirement for public schools.
- Lamont says testing will improve as Quest Labs begins to accept samples and at least four hospitals prepare to test samples in their own FDA-certified labs. **A4**
- Democratic presidential candidates Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders criticize the Trump administration’s response. **A5**

No March Madness

- The NCAA canceled the men’s and women’s basketball tournaments. All remaining conference tournaments were canceled too.
- UConn suspended all athletics activities indefinitely over virus fears.
- Major League Baseball suspends operations for four weeks, delaying the start of the season by two weeks. The Hartford Yard Goats’ season has been delayed and the Hartford Athletic soccer team’s season will be delayed at least 30 days.
- The NHL and AHL suspend their seasons. **SPORTS, C1-C6**



Connecticut Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz, fourth from left, and Gov. Ned Lamont, foreground, tour the Protein Sciences lab in Meriden where a coronavirus vaccine is being developed. Site head Mireli Fino said the vaccine’s first stage of testing could begin by the end of the year.

For stocks, worst day since 1987

BY STAN CHOE AND ALEX VEIGA
Associated Press

NEW YORK — The escalating coronavirus emergency Thursday sent stocks to their worst losses since the Black Monday crash of 1987, extending a sell-off that has now wiped out most of Wall Street’s big run-up since President Donald Trump’s election.

The S&P 500 plummeted 9.5%, for a total drop of 26.7% from its all-time high, set just last month. That puts it way past the 20% threshold to make this a bear market, snapping an unprecedented, nearly 11-year bull-market run.

The Nasdaq fell 9.43%, or 750.25, to 7,201.80. The Dow Jones Industrial Average sank 10% for its worst day since a nearly 23% drop on Oct. 19, 1987.

European markets lost 12% in one of their worst days ever.

The heavy losses came amid a cascade of cancellations and shutdowns across the globe — including Trump’s suspension of most travel to the U.S. from Europe — and rising worries that the White House and other authorities around the world can’t or won’t counter the economic damage from the coronavirus pandemic any

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New Haven Superintendent of Schools Ilene Tracey, left, with Mayor Justin Elicker, announces the indefinite closure of all New Haven Public Schools starting Friday.

With waiver announcement, Lamont opens door for more school closures

BY NICHOLAS RONDINONE

Coronavirus concerns and the governor’s waiver Thursday of the state’s mandatory 180 days of school instruction prompted closures in the state’s largest school districts, raising questions about child care for working families and the availability of free or reduced-price meals for low-income students.

In an effort to ease the pressure on superintendents, Gov. Ned Lamont is-

sued an order Thursday lifting the 180-day requirement. By law, districts are required to teach students for that amount of days, but with the waiver, districts can end school on June 30, regardless of whether they met the state requirement.

In swift measures, superintendents from Hartford to Stamford announced plans that will keep tens of thousands of students home for at least two weeks, with few definitive plans for when they will return.

“Decisions about safety have to be made and having this waiver for 180 days allows districts to make decision based on student safety, which is the most important thing,” said Education Commissioner Miguel A. Cardona.

Cardona acknowledged the unique situations each district faces as they deal with the coronavirus crisis.

“Closing schools is a last resort ... for many students,

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State IDs three new virus cases

BY ALEX PUTTERMAN, CHRISTOPHER KEATING, NICHOLAS RONDINONE AND ELIZA FAWCETT

Between 10% and 20% of the state’s population could contract COVID-19 over the next month or two, Connecticut’s chief epidemiologist said Thursday, as state officials announced new efforts to mitigate the coronavirus outbreak, including a ban on large gatherings.

“When this is all over, probably about 70% of our population will have had this infection,” Matthew Cartter said at a briefing with Gov. Ned Lamont and others.

“That’s between this wave and if there’s a second wave in the fall. Because this is a virus none of us have immunity to. Right now we’re trying to slow that down.”

Lamont issued executive orders banning gatherings of 250 or more people and waiving the state’s 180-day requirement for public schools following a series of announcements from Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport and numerous other cities and towns that schools would be shut down to prevent the spread of the disease.

Officials identified three additional COVID-19 cases

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Coronavirus Questions?

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